St. Charles [illegible] Library
Carthagena, Ohio

Marianne Moore: In the Grand Tradition

— Bette Richart

THE

Commonweal

Rich Repast

THE TREASURES OF CHRISTMAS

by H. A. Reinhold

Abbé Pierre

PRIEST OF THE IMMEDIATE

by Dorothy Day

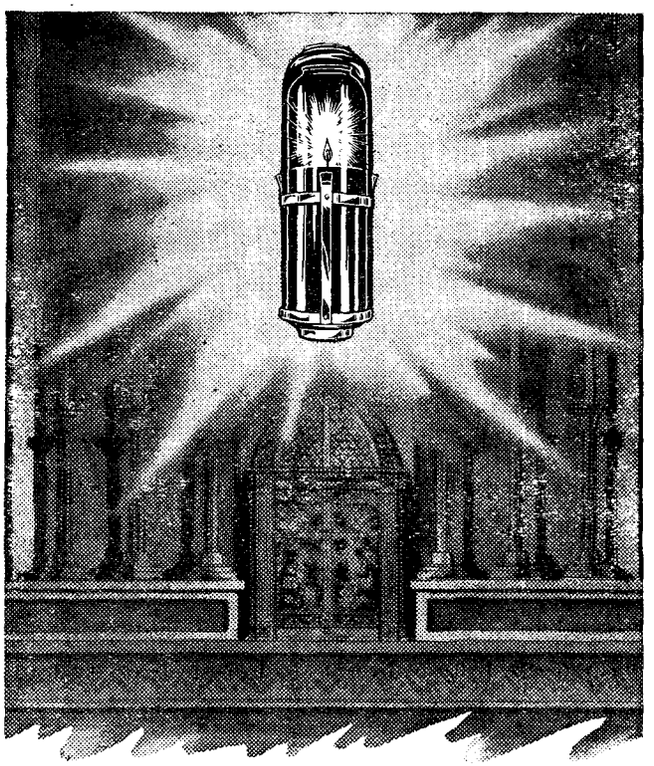
Feeding the Hungry

CHALLENGE TO ABUNDANCE

by A. Nevett

olume LXV, No. 13 December 28, 1956 Twenty Cents

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



In Harmony with Taste, Custom and Law

There are many fine churches in the country where you will notice how appropriately the Dome Shaped Sanctuary Globe matches the beauty and dignity of its surroundings.

This particular lamp is an original Will & Baumer creation. It was designed to conform to the current trend in Tabernacle construction and to serve as an efficient fixture for another Will & Baumer development — the *Lux Domini Sanctolite* in the bottle style container — the first commercially offered blend of *pure olive oil* and *pure beeswax* to comply with Canon 1271.

Together, lamp and light form a liturgical combination that speaks good taste, abides by ecclesiastical custom and conforms strictly to canonical requirements.

The Pioneer Church Candle Manufacturers of America

IN OUR SECOND CENTURY OF FINE CANDLE MAKING

Purveyors to the Vatican by Appointment

SYRACUSE BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO LOS ANGELES MONTREAL

Will & Baumer CHURCH CANDLES

THIS WEEK

Week by Week 323
The Treasures of Christmas *by H. A. Reinhold* 327
Challenge to Abundance *by A. Nevett* 329
Priest of the Immediate *by Dorothy Day* 331
The Stage *by Richard Hayes* 333
The Screen *by Philip T. Hartung* 334
A Poem *by Samuel Menashe* 335
Every Christmas *by John Cogley* 336
Epilogue, Songs of the Spouses, Complaint of Love: A Poem *by John Logan* 337
In the Grand Tradition *by Bette Richart* 338
Books 340

THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

Editor
EDWARD S. SKILLIN

Managing Editor
JAMES O'GARA

Associate Editors
JAMES FINN
PHILIP SCHARPER

Contributing Editors
JOHN C. CORT
ANNE FREMANTLE
PHILIP T. HARTUNG
RICHARD HAYES

JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1956 in the U. S. A. by the Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y., MUrray Hill 3-9685

U. S. and Canada, $8 a year. Foreign, $10. Single copies 20¢

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

CHRISTMAS, 1956

FOR MOST American Catholics, as well as for most Americans generally, Christmas this year will be a time for counting blessings. The nation is at a peak of prosperity higher than it has ever known. The nation is at peace—an uneasy peace, to be sure, but at least no American soldier will pass Christmas in a foxhole, no American soldier will kill or be killed in a combat that seems to mock the ancient angelic promise of peace on earth.

And Christmas will be more than a time for counting blessings. It will be a happy season, as it should be, and a holy season, too. We shall be struck at least once with the wonder and the glory of it all, and be grateful for the miracle and mystery whereby the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. At least once, amid the gift-giving and getting, the festive decorations, the countless hearings of "Silent Night" and "Jingle Bells," the quiet contentment of the Day, we shall think of the Child and be glad.

And yet the very Christianity we profess forbids complete gladness, and puts upon us the burden of sorrow and anguish even as we rejoice. Our Christian profession reminds us that the Word dwells among us in our fellow men, who are actual or potential members of His Mystical Body. Our Christianity makes us aware that at the very moment we celebrate the Birth of Christ, He is, in His brothers, undergoing the Passion.

In Hungary the streets still run with blood and broken bodies sprawl in the debris of bombed-out buildings. The smell of death hangs heavy in the air above the shattered streets of Port Said. War threatens in the Middle East, and modern instruments of death are being massed in the very land made holy by His presence. Jews are being deported from Egypt, where He once found refuge. Arab refugees form an island of misery in the Palestine area.

These events, and the enormous evil which they represent, seem at once to clamor for and deny a solution. To think of the immense weight of human suffering in Hungary and in the Middle East alone, and then to consider how seemingly hopeless these situations are, baffles the mind and torments the heart.

NOR IS one comforted when he thinks of other lands and other peoples. In the underdeveloped countries of the world famine is merely the intensification of the day-to-day experience of hunger and of want. Meanwhile, the United States is faced with an ever-increasing pile of surplus foods and goods, and the national economy creaks under the burden. The country's very prosperity makes it, paradoxically, a prisoner of its own plenty while millions abroad face daily the specter of starvation. Confronting this situation, too, the mind is baffled and the conscience pained. How long before this nation can find the mixture of charity, justice and enlightened self-interest which is necessary to unlock its bursting granaries to the needy of the world?

And what of the needy here at home? It is so easy to forget, in times of prosperity, that America has her poor. It is so easy to forget that Christianity has traditionally called them "God's poor," and has given them, as it were, a strange and special place in the human family. The plight of the poor, too, tortures the mind and troubles the conscience. The Christian cannot rest until the hungry are fed, the homeless are housed and the abandoned are taken in.

Nor can the Christian rest so long as the evil of racism lives, for the Christian knows, no matter how

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he may rebel at the thought, that Christ has identified Himself with every victim of injustice and hatred, and that "any man who says he loves God and hates his neighbor is a liar." It is Christ, in effect, Who is denied decent housing in "restricted" neighborhoods in the North, pushed, often, to the back pews of Southern churches, kept from the classrooms of the "white" school.

Editorials and articles in this present issue of The Commonweal deal with some of these events which so painfully challenge the Christian conscience in this year of Our Lord. As a result, this, the Christmas issue of The Commonweal, does not make particularly cheerful reading. But in no other issue throughout the year is it as appropriate to discuss, as this issue does, the plight of the poor at home and throughout the world, the distress and suffering caused by international fear and hatred, and the challenge to the Christian voiced in the liturgy for Christmas Day.

POLICY IN OKINAWA

THE UNITED STATES has had no choice but to establish and maintain powerful forward bases in Europe and the Pacific. Self-defense and defense of the free world have demanded it. As tensions have eased and national economies recovered, demands for a return of sovereignty over American-manned base areas have increased. As such a development was foreseen, Okinawa has been built up partly in preparation for the time when such full-fledged nations as the Philippines and Japan would insist on the return of these base areas. But the evidence is now plentiful that our policies in Okinawa have led to an almost unanimous demand to return to Japanese sovereignty.

Are such sentiments inevitable in the anti-colonialist climate of today, in view of normal prejudices against foreign occupying troops and incessant Communist propaganda? Or have the American military authorities on this "atom-proof bomb base 500 miles from Red China" been handling Okinawa badly?

It appears that there have been a number of egregious injustices. Land has been expropriated from the inhabitants wholesale without due compensation. On an island where there is terrific demographic pressure American authorities have taken 16,000 out of the 80,000 cultivatable acres and are planning to take possession of 3,000 more. The fact that some of this has been used for homes and grounds and recreational facilities for base personnel has hardly made the seizure any more palatable. At first the average Okinawan farmer displaced by this process received but $20 a year—now generously upped to a little over $60—to make up for the loss of his livelihood.

The record on employment is hardly better. For one thing wage scales were set up on the basis of nationality, with the native Okinawans at the bottom of the scale. Making every allowance for cheaper living costs, it is hard to see how an Okinawan and his family could live on wages which range from 8 to 21 cents per hour. Teachers' pay runs on a comparable scale; the original salary figure of $23.33 per month is soon to be brought up to $40.

When the Okinawans find themselves under such duress as this, with the Americans planning to stay on indefinitely, is it any wonder that they seek to return to Japanese rule? We are on the island in sufficient force to handle all Okinawan opposition. Yet there have been serious popular demonstrations. The Okinawans tend to think of themselves as Japanese, anyway, and agitation in the mother country is increasing both in political circles and the Japanese press. And despite their remoteness in the far Pacific, the Okinawans can also appeal to the UN and to the Soviets to bring their case before the UN as well. Their plight is already widely known in Asia. The livelihood of the Okinawan people and our good repute among the free peoples of the world are both in jeopardy unless the American authorities put through sweeping changes.

CHURCHES AND TAX-EXEMPTION

DR. EUGENE Carson Blake, president of the National Council of Churches, recently attracted considerable attention by his remarks on the subject of churches and tax-free wealth. Many Protestants, we feel, as well as Catholics, will re-

NEXT WEEK

HORACE GREGORY writes about the situation of religious poetry in the modern world.

"During the present decade the age has become disillusioned with the results of disillusionment. Images of strange gods have become true monsters, and the human fall from grace has lacked tragic significance. The twentieth century's errors and mistakes are all too clearly the marks of naiveté and folly."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gret the general tone and almost inevitable consequences of his observations.

Dr. Blake expressed his alarm that "more and more untaxed and untaxable wealth falls into the hands of the churches." And he added, in a frank admission, "Perhaps part of my concern is because too large a share seems to be falling into the hands of one church." He did not name the church he had in mind, but no one imagines that he was referring to Jehovah's Witnesses. The future Dr. Blake sees is a dark one. "How many decades will it be," he asked, "before the U.S. may find itself dominated by the wealth of a church or churches so at last no alternative but revolution and expropriation will be before the people?"

In his talk, Dr. Blake stressed the significance of separation of church and state as practiced in the United States and told his audience: "God can be equally shackled by an all-powerful totalitarian church as by an all-powerful totalitarian state. It will be well for all Americans who believe in God to combine to resist any who, either in the name of God or of public order, would try to upset that delicate balance between duty to God and state, which is the inherited guaranty of our religious liberty."

The editors of this magazine feel no necessity at this date to record our devotion to the principle of religious liberty contained in the American Constitution. Our editorial policies have made our attitude on this question very clear over the last three decades. Nor do we think the question of tax-exemption for churches is a sacred cow which cannot be discussed by any citizen. But Dr. Blake's remarks seem to us unfortunately inflammatory and unlikely to produce a sober and reasoned discussion of an important problem.

Under normal circumstances, the accumulation of wealth in a few hands is a serious and dangerous thing in any society—so serious, for example, that it was one of the abuses cited by the Popes in their encyclicals on social reform. As far as we can see, however, such dangers do not exist in relation to the wealth held by religious bodies in the United States—Catholic, Protestant or Jewish. If one were to total up the cost of churches and synagogues, and of hospitals, schools, orphanages and the like which are operated by religious groups, we feel sure the total value in dollars would be staggeringly high—a figure that could then be used indiscriminately as a set of "scare" statistics for the unwary. But such "wealth" does not carry with it power in the way, for example, that the accumulation of coal mines, or steel companies or railroads would. When a few individuals possess or control commanding holdings in such ventures, it is proper to worry. But if on paper the total value of all the churches in the country adds up to an astronomical figure, as it surely must, we see nothing in that to worry about.

On the question of tax-exemption, the reason behind it seems to us in the best American tradition, rather than the reverse. We live in a pluralistic society, with a government of delegated powers. Tax-exemption for educational, charitable and religious ventures supports the American ideal by encouraging various non-governmental groups and organizations to carry out such activities rather than to leave them to a potentially all-powerful state. The scope and extent of such tax-exemption should, of course, be subject to regulations; a tax-exempt group might reasonably be prohibited, for example, from running a regular, continuing business on a tax-free basis, in competition with other businesses which necessarily pay taxes. Such a ruling should be guided by common sense; it is hardly necessary to put restrictions on cake sales or similar sporadic efforts which are part of the fund-raising activities of many religious and charitable organizations. But we see no reason why a noodle factory or a shoe plant owned and operated by a religious or educational institution, not for its own personnel but for profit, should be able to compete on a tax-free basis with other businesses. However, the big offenders on this score, if it is an offense, are some of the large, non-religious universities, which hold such business property on a tax-free basis as part of their endowments. As far as we know, a ban on such tax-exemption would not significantly affect any religious body.

In general, the desire to prevent abuses of the tax-free status is certainly a legitimate one. If this was Dr. Blake's intention, though, he went at it in a strange fashion. He was not, he said, trying to stir up Protestant-Catholic tension which is "so happily at a minimum in this country." Whatever Dr. Blake's intentions, however, we fear that his speech has not only materially increased Protestant-Catholic tensions but has given new ammunition to the secularists in American society.

STAGNATION AT SUEZ

MANY NATIONS suffer from the Suez Canal stoppage. Egypt is deprived of very important revenues; the oil-producing Arab states have their market cut; Europe is curtailed on fuel for industrial and domestic use and has to pay

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more for what it does manage to obtain; the United States has new demands to meet to bolster Allied economies.

Apparently Egypt hopes to benefit in bargaining by holding up salvage and clearing operations —as does Syria similarly by not permitting even inspection of the damage done to vital pipelines. Indeed by the time the French and British (and Israeli) troops have all departed, the NATO powers will retain little leverage to hasten reopening of the Canal.

But back of all this tactical delaying on Nasser's part, damaging to so many, lies the main issue still unresolved: who is to control the Canal in its resumed operations? There is little indication that Egypt will step back from its full claim. The barest possibility, suggested in a letter from England to the New York *Times,* is that the UN or one of its agencies might obtain from Egypt a lease to the Suez Canal facilities.

TOWARD A FOREIGN POLICY

THE MOST serious criticisms leveled at the present Administration have been directed at our foreign policy. In formulation it has generally been uncertain and vacillating. In the instances where the desired goals had been clearly stated, the execution of our policies has too often been inefficient and ineffective.

The Suez crisis has accentuated one area of our foreign policy that has been meaningfully if inadequately defined by the phrase, "the new pacifism." Through statements of the President, our Secretary of State and delegates to the United Nations, the United States declared, at the time of the crisis, that it was opposed to the unilateral use of force as a means of achieving national goals and to the aggressive invasion of Egypt by our Western allies. We were, of course, not only opposed to but repelled by the Soviet brutalities in Hungary. But we could not suggest forceful intervention for fear of bringing an atomic holocaust upon the entire world. Yet we could not bring to bear upon Russia the moral and economic suasions we used with our allies. We were able, therefore, to influence, and weaken, the actions of our allies but not those of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, we seemed to make the formulation of foreign policy wait upon decisions of the UN.

These are the criticisms. They are severe and they are, in good part, valid. But they are partially balanced by real gains. Much of our recently gained prestige with Afro-Asian countries is the direct result of our anti-colonial policy and the statements of high moral principles by which we are guided. The President is widely known as a man of peace.

Our foreign policy of the last several years, both as it was formulated and implemented, has given the United States a position with sharply defined strengths and weaknesses. Tributes to our leaders are welcome, and world opinion does have positive consequences. But those critics are right who say that we have won them at too high a cost if we have forfeited the threat of force as a weapon of diplomacy and have put upon the UN burdens which it was not designed to bear.

Yet our position is not so weak as the severest critics would have it. At least it is not if we are learning to wage effective *political* warfare. This, in the face of a renewed cold war, is what is most needed. We have not been notably successful in the past. But a few recent actions, and primarily some within the UN, indicate that we may be learning. The world situation has rarely been more fluid than it now is. We can hope to shape it to our ends only if we have a developed policy of our own. The strongest reason for optimism at this point is that our leaders, and notably President Eisenhower, show signs that they realize it too.

WALTON'S *ANGLER*

FROM ALL the harsh, unpleasant and distressing aspects of modern life many people, surely, have turned to *The Compleat Angler* with gratitude and relief. Since its publication in 1653 Izaak Walton's pleasant, leisurely treatise has maintained a sure popularity. It is composed of that which resists the corrosion of time. It appeals even to those who think that the proper place for a fish is on the dinner plate. It inspires faith in the goodness of man, belief in the beauty of nature, and fond trust in its author.

Now irreverent scholarship, in the person of Gerald Bentley of Princeton, has disclosed that Izaak Walton was all too clearly part of his age, that he probably "cribbed" much of his *Angler* from another book. At least, when passages from the two books are compared they are found to be "surprisingly similar." Of course the *Angler* remains what it was. If it was pleasurable before, it should be so still. Yet the dark knowledge of "cribbing" is there to haunt us. It will not be put aside. And who will be able to approach the *Angler* with the trusting innocence it called forth in the past?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Treasures of Christmas

"THE MOST POWERFUL MEDICINE AGAINST SHALLOW SENTIMENTALISM, WHICH BREEDS SECULARISM, IS THE WORD COMING ON WINGS OF GRACE"

H. A. REINHOLD

THE ROMAN celebration of the Nativity found in our missals is based on the Nativity celebration in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. That is the first thing to keep in mind if we are to make the most of the rich repast of liturgy offered us in our Christmas Worship. We should also remember that we have only half a Christmas if we do not also keep in mind the Epiphany with its great mystery. Like Good Friday and the Easter Vigil, Christmas and Epiphany belong together and explain each other.

Both Christmas and Epiphany have three Masses. The three Masses of Epiphany are now spread over three different days (January 6th, 13th and the Sunday following), but on the Feast of the Nativity the three Masses are all on the same day. Most of us, however, are not aware of a most important feature—that these three Masses are to be celebrated in three different places. The Mass at midnight is to be offered at the crib in St. Mary Major, the Mass at dawn at the church of St. Anastasia at the Palatine hill, and the last and most solemn Mass at the main altar of St. Mary Major (originally, however, at St. Peter's).

Why the choice of these three churches? According to the best hypothesis, Rome tried to imitate the usage of Jerusalem at a period shortly after the emancipation of the Church by the edicts of Constantine. Many pilgrims came back from the Holy Land with reports on the celebration of the sacred events in the life of Our Lord in the very places where they had taken place.

In Jerusalem that meant a midnight Mass at the place of the crib in Bethlehem, where the imperial family had erected a great basilica. In Rome its substitute was the large shrine of the Blessed Mother which contained the relics of the crib according to tradition. From Bethlehem the pilgrims walked to the Sanctuary of the Resurrection, called in Greek the *Anastasis*. There the Mass was to be sung at dawn, the time of the "resurrection" of the sun, the most powerful symbol of the victorious Christ. The Roman *Anastasis* was a replica built on an equivocation: the Church of St. Anastasia, the virgin martyr, a sanctuary near the imperial palace and very convenient for the courtiers and the Greek colony living at the imperial court. The several texts of this Mass that refer to light and speak of radiance were chosen purposely for this Mass at sunrise.

The third Mass in Jerusalem was held at the Cathedral. It was the principal and most solemn celebration and therefore the most profoundly theological. In Rome the most popular church, embodying the fondest memories of local pride, was the one erected so recently as a *martyrium*—a witness memorial —over the grave of Peter. The Mass texts gave splendor to the full meaning of the Incarnation by reaching beyond its historical details. In later ages another consideration moved this third Mass to where it is today: the main sanctuary of St. Mary Major, the shrine of the *Theotokos,* the Mother of God, whose human assent was the divinely fashioned instrument of the Incarnation so fully hymned in the first chapter of Hebrews and in the first chapter of John's Gospel, both of which are read on this day.

Added to this is Psalm 97, so pregnant with majesty and eternity, echoing through the Introit, the Gradual responsory and the Communion procession, and the result is one of the most powerful compositions of the normally powerful and virile liturgy of the city of Rome, which is also our own. It is obvious, then, that we miss the point of this ancient trilogy of Masses, if

Father H. A. Reinhold, a frequent contributor to The Commonweal, is a well-known writer on the Liturgical Movement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

we perform them like "three of the same," one after the other. They come to life for us, plastically and in their symbolical meaning, only at the times appointed for them, at midnight, at dawn and in the morning.

NO DOUBT the midnight Mass, with its intimate beauty, has become closest to the heart of the people. Its Gospel is most consoling, and contains the message that all Christians accept as the inspiration of the whole festal season. Generations that look for idylls, and not for great visions, have too often overlooked, however, the full liturgical significance of the midnight Mass. The Psalms chosen for it hardly support the sentimentality with which the midnight Mass is often surrounded. Rather, the chords that rise from these Psalms boom and resound with strength and give a background of eternity, of kingdom, of strife and of victory to the sweet texts of the readings.

When the clergy enter the church the music is set to the words of the martial Psalm 2. Not only is it a thought of eternity: "The Lord said to me: thou art my Son, I have begotten Thee today," that raises the story of the Gospel into its proper setting, but this antiphon echoes and re-echoes thoughts of strife and war: "Why do the heathen rage and the nations devise vain plots?" Here we have the complete, not the fragmentary, aspect of the Nativity. It is not meant to serve as an escape into a golden past. When the music of the Latin words is stripped off, the Epistle, in its plain English, says: deny worldly desire and live soberly, justly and godly; look for the coming of the great God and Savior; He gave Himself to cleanse us.

This is followed by an excerpt from Psalm 109 in the Gradual which, after an attentive hearing of the Epistle and before the "presence" of Christ in the words of His Gospel, serves to focus our thoughts; even in translation it is not idyllic, but filled with a reality that surpasses all nature: "With Thee is royal power on the day of Thy power: in the splendor of Holies have I begotten Thee from my loins before the morning star: The Lord said to my Lord: sit at my right hand until I make thy enemies the footstool of Thy feet." Then, as a preparation for the Gospel, its theological "level" is set by the threefold Alleluia that contains again the words: "The Lord said to me: Thou art my Son, I have begotten Thee today."

These Psalms have the impact of their Christian meaning, not that of the Hebrew original. They are here not so much the cries of souls groping for God, but, like marble columns taken from ancient buildings and reshaped to serve their new purpose of building the spiritual mansion of the divine in humanity, they are triumphant statements of the unfathomable mystery that emerged with the Nativity into the vision of man.

They have become so much a part of the liturgy that, where they occur in it, it would be vain to replace them with versions "truer to the original." They were chosen for the obvious and typical meaning when they were reset in the crown of worship. The Psalms and canticles, the prophecies and Old Testament quotations used in the Mass are not there for their authenticity and accuracy to prove a dogma, but to express the faith assumed by all and presumed to have inspired the choice of the little stones out of which the mosaic of words is composed. And this mosaic of texts clamors for its music, its liturgical execution, its celebrating congregations, its interpretation in chant and gesture and for the word of the preacher who is to interpret it. Only in its totality does it convey the full meaning of this great feast, of which the crib is only a partial, although a central glimpse of the whole.

WITH THIS wealth at our disposal, every year for more than a thousand years, why is it that we are dogged today by a secularized Christmas of office parties and Santa Clauses, with ad-men's and salesmen's Christmases outside our churches? Why the little inanities with carols inside? Where is the impact of those powerful prophecies, the turning of the minds, the *metanoeite* of St. John, our spiritual guide through Advent? In the name of this feast and in the power of its grace, who cannot but turn his face toward the future instead of lingering in escapist dreams about his childhood memories? Yet why is it all lost, not only on the people, but all too often upon their leaders, lay and clerical, who seem almost blind to the images our liturgy not only conjures up before our minds, but even fulfills with Sacramental reality. These texts should heat the metal of our souls for the grace to forge it into a new image, but it all goes by—charitably dismissed as at best an esthete's revery. But why?

One of the answers is so simple that few think of it: because it is all in Latin. Having a translation in one's hands to watch it is not the same as singing or as listening without the need of an interpreter, as it were; and it is not the same as immediacy in celebration. How can one be all ear and eye, when he has to flip pages and keep track of texts? Besides the "people of the book," in this case, will always be the few, maybe the elect.

Whether the vernacular translations have the sonorous tunefulness of the Latin or will always lack this quality is irrelevant so long as the Latin is, in effect, a mute beauty that is mutely admired—mere sound to entrance the listener without speaking to him. The angels above Bethlehem's field did not sing, in celestial idiom, an unknown text; the shepherds heard in their language the "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will."

Esthetically, the blend of Gregorian chant with the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

words *"In splendoribus Sanctorum ante luciferum genui te,"* sung while the faithful receive Holy Communion the Incarnate Son Whom this Psalm so plastically glorifies, is superb—for him to whom it is more than mere sound. But an adequate English version: "in the splendor of the Holies before the morning star I have begotten Thee," together with its Psalm, pierces mere hearing and stamps the soul with a live image of the coming Savior. We need all the beauty that is at man's command to feast this mystery, but we are in equal need of the truth, and truth is not conveyed by rationally mute sound.

The most powerful medicine against shallow sentimentalism, which breeds secularism, is the Word coming on wings of grace. "In these times God has spoken to us with a Son to speak for Him; . . Through Him . . He created the world of time; a Son who is the radiance of His Father's splendor and the full expression of his being. . . Lord, Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth at its beginning and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They will perish, but Thou wilt remain; they will all be like a cloak that grows threadbare and thou wilt lay them aside like a garment and exchange them for new; but Thou art He who never changes; Thy years will not come to an end." (from the Epistle of the Third Mass). This thunder is echoed by John in the Gospel. In English, they will be drunk deep, like a draft of clear water. They will prepare the soul better than man-made aspirations to receive the Bread of Life.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

Challenge to Abundance

A. NEVETT

FEW INDIVIDUALS, let alone nations, succeed in excluding considerations of personal gain from their actions. And when it is a question of wealth leaving one's country, caution reaches a high-water mark. It is not surprising, therefore, that most people want to make assurance doubly sure when voting for the giving of foreign aid, especially if the recipients are the poorer, underdeveloped countries.

The reason for this caution is not so much that the rich, whether nations or individuals, are reluctant to give, but rather that they do not really care about the poor, and seem to think that the plight of the poor is entirely their own fault. Dives, it would seem, was punished not so much for refusing to help Lazarus as for ignoring him, even though he lived on Dives' very doorstep. So, too, today many, both in the West *and* in the East, do not care how the poor live. Most likely, were they to have a true idea of the situation, they would be more ready to help.

India, for example, is a typical underdeveloped country which profits from foreign aid. At a rough estimate a dollar is worth five rupees, and the American standard of living is roughly five times higher than the Indian, so wages can be compared roughly at one dollar for one rupee. Indian agricultural workers earn from forty to sixty rupees a month; a much sought-after job is as spinner or weaver in the textile industry at eighty to one hundred rupees a month. Thus, allowing for a difference in the standard of living, the Indian worker is from three to four times worse off than is his opposite number in America. One can understand why so many are close to destitution.

Statesmen of moral stature, most notably, perhaps, Charles Malik of Lebanon and Lord Boyd-Orr, former Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, have protested against the injustice of the fact that three-quarters of mankind are undernourished while the other fourth struggles to dispose of surpluses in food and other products. In the face of such a situation it is amazing to read about *burdensome* surpluses of wheat and other foodstuffs causing serious concern in certain countries.

According to the latest global survey (Food and Agricultural Organization Annual Report, 1954) the surplus of wheat in the U.S., Canada, Argentine and Australia is 500 million hundred-weight; of secondary cereals, some 300 million hundredweight in the U.S. alone. Even before the 1955 harvest there was enough wheat in the U.S. to feed the whole American population for two years. The excess cotton in U.S. warehouses would suffice to supply every American with seventy-two shirts. The world food surplus, i.e., the troublesome surplus which the rich countries do not exactly know what to do with, is sufficient to supply 500 calories a day for a year to 1,500 million people—well over half the world's population.

Father A. Nevett, S. J., has had wide missionary experience in India and has written numerous articles on Missiology.

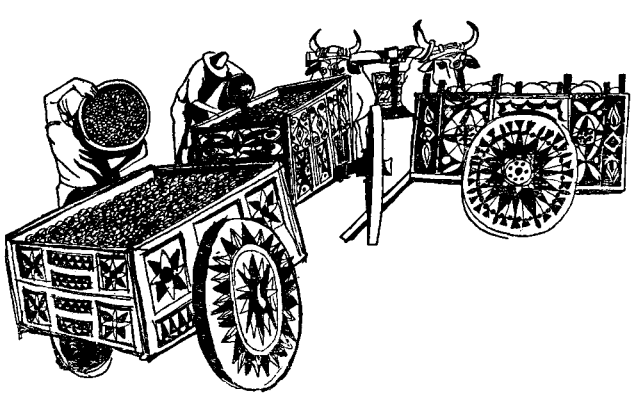
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is, of course, the point of view of the American, Canadian or Australian farmer who does not want to see his standard of living fall below that of the rest of his country. There is the point of view of the political party which does not want to estrange the farming community and lose its vote. But there is also the point of view of the Asian and African worker, who has to put up a very hard struggle indeed to get even the bare necessities of life for himself and his family—one full meal a day, a modicum of clothing and shelter. What must be his point of view of these "burdensome" surpluses of both foodstuffs and cultivable land.

We have heard a lot in the past of the white man's burden. Surely this is one he can get rid of very quickly! And surely there is something radically wrong with a world economy which results in a few countries' being plagued with surpluses while the majority suffer from scarcity. There certainly is a way out of this impasse—at a price. The price is a sacrifice on the part of the haves for the have-nots, not out of motives of charity only, but because politically and economically, as well as morally, it is the best and wisest course to follow.

IT IS generally admitted that the underdeveloped countries need capital, part of which they must find at home. But they cannot find enough of it *now* to meet current difficulties. India may again be taken as a typical example. Economically, and thus, indirectly, politically, her main problem is to develop the country at a sufficiently rapid rate, firstly, to meet the needs of a growing population. (There is nothing "catastrophic" in this rate of growth—it is not higher than that of the U.S.). Secondly, rapid development is necessary to satisfy the desires of an awakening political conscience. Given ample time, India could accomplish this task herself. But the economic lag caused by her industrial and agricultural backwardness, and the political situation, especially the spread of Communism, do not grant this much breathing space.

Hence the need of immediate aid in the development of Indian industries and the improvement of agricultural methods. India has large potential resources, but unless these are exploited at a more rapid rate than they have been in the past, the standard of living will sink even lower. A generous measure of help over the next two decades will achieve a definite improvement; niggardly help will, if anything, only increase India's feeling of frustration.



The difficulty of finding satisfactory ways of investing is genuine. The fear of "strings" on the part of the recipient and the fear of loss on the part of the investor seriously hamper agreement. It is sometimes asked, for instance, why the little aid given by Russia to India is made much more of than the far greater share donated by America. One of the main reasons is that, generally speaking, there is no suspicion of "strings" attached to the Soviet offer. Furthermore, a strong wave of nationalism, understandable in view of a recent colonial background, accentuates the difficulty of loans and gifts of the kind which the U.S. has frequently made.

For these and similar reasons a clearing-house for international aid of both loans and gifts is a more acceptable solution. Prime Minister Nehru has asked for something of this nature, and such an arrangement would satisfy most recipient nations. It would safeguard them from the fear of political domination and preserve their national dignity in the reception of aid—a very important consideration at the moment for the new nations of the East.

While it is true that such a clearing-house for gifts and loans would deprive donor nations of some self-advertisement, the sacrifice of such glorification must be made for higher motives. Moreover, in the long run, intentions of genuine disinterestedness pay off better in terms of permanent good relations. One tires of hearing the generosity of any nation being continually advertised after the fashion of the latest detergent.

ANOTHER SATISFACTORY method of help without seeming to patronize is the loan of Western technicians to the East and the training of Eastern technicians in the highly industrialized countries. There are, for instance, over three thousand Indian students in America today. This represents a greater power for good or for evil than is generally realized. If we recall that a large percentage of Asian and African Communist leaders received their training in Western universities, the danger is obvious. Visiting students may be alienated by an unfriendly reception, or—an even more potent influence—they may be impressed only by the material aspects of the new civilization they now witness. As a result, they may return to their own countries with the false impression that material progress alone will solve all problems.

While it is true that these students must get the best technological training possible—though it is an error to think that the latest American methods are by that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

very fact the best for underdeveloped countries—it is much more important that they establish permanent friendly relations with their hosts and carry away with them lasting cultural and spiritual values. In all this the method of giving is quite as important as the gift. Too often have Eastern students returned home armed with a technical proficiency which was earned at the cost of jettisoning their own far more valuable spiritual and cultural values.

It would be naive to believe that a better distribution of the world's wealth could easily be achieved. There is the egoism of the rich nations, on the one hand, and, on the other, the turbulant nationalism of the poor nations. These conflicting passions are not easy to reconcile. But who can doubt that every effort must be made to collaborate and that, to a large extent, international peace depends on the result of such collaboration?

The problem of aid to underdeveloped countries is discussed on all sides. It is agreed that measures must be taken. The crux of the question is time; these measures must be executed now. History records that many a civilization need not have perished had it not fatally dallied over necessary reforms. It is to be hoped that the same fateful delay will not be repeated in our time. It is getting late, but it is not yet too late.

ABBÉ PIERRE

Priest of the Immediate

DOROTHY DAY

WE NOW have the words of Abbé Pierre in print, but he himself did not write a book. *The Rag Pickers of Emmaus,* which Kenedy published early last year, was written by someone else, and *Abbé Pierre Speaks,* which was published last month by Sheed and Ward, is a collection of his talks. There was a tape recorder or a very good stenographer catching everything he said in sermons and over the radio, or in the intimacy of his own group, and the result is that you cannot read this book without feeling its immediacy and being stirred to the marrow of your bones. Here is a man of compassion, a priest of great heart who holds out his arms to all suffering ones. "Out of the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaketh," and thanks to all these translated notes, we know what is in Abbé Pierre's heart.

It was customary in an earlier age for priests to wander around Europe, as St. Francis did, as St. Ignatius and his band of twelve priests and laymen did, but we don't hear much of such adventures these days. There is not only more organization in the Church, there is more discipline. But World War II brought about many changes in Europe, and one of those changes meant great freedom in the life of many of France's priests. They still are conscripted, serve in the armies; ordained priests go to the front not only as chaplains but also as soldiers. Only last week a Sulpician told me that the seminaries in France were half empty because of the war in Africa. And after France was occupied and many of the priests taken prisoner, we had such accounts as Father Perrin's *Priest Workman in Germany,* the story of the priest in factory and in prison.

Abbé Pierre was one of these priests who "was hunted like a bandit for two years" when he served as a *maqui.* He was two years a chaplain in the navy and he also served in Africa. He was ordained a Capuchin but left the order to work as a parish priest. Later he served in the Chamber of Deputies in Paris, and it was thanks to his salary as a Deputy that he was able to start his first hospice, or rather very informally take in some of the needy men he encountered in the slums in Paris.

Besides being something of a politician, Abbé Pierre is something of an actor, wearing still, it would seem, the garb of chaplain, a beret, a string of service stripes and decorations across the front of his clerical garb, and regular clodhopper shoes. But if this makes him the more striking, if it calls attention to his role of prophet today, crying out for the poor, we may be only too happy that he has this flair, this streak of the romantic in him, to light up his role.

"You can live alongside people whose lives are horrible and absolutely hellish and not have the faintest idea of this because they have the decency and self-respect not to go shouting the fact from the roof top or whining about it in the streets. They are ashamed and degraded," he says.

He goes on to tell of a young man of twenty-five who came to tell him that his wife has just been taken away

---

Dorothy Day, of the Catholic Worker, is a frequent contributor. Her latest book is *The Long Loneliness.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to a mental hospital. In the three years of their married life, they had been forced to share one room with two other families. He had two babies and another one on the way. The young man sat and wept like a child.

Another time he saw an eighteen-year-old girl who had been fished out of the Seine. She had been living with eleven other people in a hole dug for the foundations of a house which had never been finished, and in the winter rains had become a mudhole.

A priest in a neighboring parish called on him to come and try to help a family in his parish, living under a tarpaulin out in a field. They had been living there for eight months although the man was working. There simply was no housing for these poor workers. Two children had already died, and one little boy remained. Another child was on the way.

"It was then that I realized some terrible things," Abbé Pierre went on to say. "I realized that so long as people who were supposed to be apostles, as long as a priest like me was incapable of saying to that poor woman, 'Come on, get your things, pick up your child and come along with me and your husband and sleep in my room: I'll take your place in the tent and tomorrow we'll find some way of solving this,'—until then, well, fundamentally I was simply a humbug.

"In point of fact if I had talked to that poor woman, who had seen two of her children die, who was possibly expecting the one that was to be born to go the same way, and might even have been tempted to do away with it herself, if I had started talking to her about heaven and hell and the law of God, and told her that she had no right to do it, that it would be a crime —I was in the process of discovering that if I told her all that and then, having had my little say, left her in her tent in her field, to her misery and distress, whilst I, the priest, went back to my room, a poor room, no doubt, but even so a real room, where I could put an electric fire on when it turned cold, and could sleep peacefully in my bed, and be alone—if, after my little sermon, I failed to take her to some more cheerful place than her own, well, then, she was bound to think to herself, 'No doubt! It's all very fine what he says! Very true! But of course he is just a humbug like all the rest, for he's left me here in these dreadful conditions. . .'

"That's what I realized!

"Oh, we all ought to come to realize that! So long as we are incapable of behaving like Our Lord, that is to say, becoming incarnate, that is to say, going down and sharing the pain and suffering of the people we are supposed to be leading into the way of truth—well in point of fact we are simply humbugs."

IT IS well known, of course, what Abbé Pierre found to do. He had already gathered a crew of seventeen men. With his Deputy's salary and by their own work as ragpickers, these men somehow built shacks for one hundred and forty-one families. They put up tents; they bought land; they argued with the Minister of Reconstruction; they went out to the streets at night and with a truck full of bread, wine, soup and blankets tried to serve the destitute. Every night until three o'clock in the morning, Abbé Pierre was out with his rag-picking friends, gathering up those who were sleeping in the doorways, lying like bundles of rags near warm ventilators. They found one old woman dying on the pavement after being evicted from her room for non-payment of rent. A child died of cold and exposure. Abbé Pierre requested the Minister of Reconstruction to come to the funeral, and he did.

Then came his now-famous radio appeal on behalf of the homeless of Paris. In the broadcast he announced that he had set up two emergency stations, and he begged his listeners to bring what they could spare of blankets, food, funds. At the doors of the relief centers which were set up were the simple words:

"Whoever you are, if you are suffering,
Come in, sleep, eat and take heart.
This is where you are loved."

And he begged his radio audience, "I beseech you, let us have enough love here and now to do this much! Let it be seen that so much suffering has at least given us back one wonderful thing: the soul of France!" And the people came with their gifts.

YES, ABBÉ Pierre is a priest who sees the immediacy of the problem around him. Although he had been involved in political action, he recognized the need to do the immediate thing. He broke the law again and again, and because he had public opinion with him, and because all Paris could see the problem, he got away with it.

We visited with Abbé Pierre when he was in New York, and were happy to have him come to lunch at our House of Hospitality. It was St. Joseph's day, and our house is called St. Joseph's house, so we always celebrate his feast. A butcher had given us enough chicken to feed the house, and the meal was a good one. It was lunch time, and in addition to the sixty people who live in the house there was a line of a few hundred men waiting outside. When Abbé Pierre arrived, scores of adulatory people came with him, and a dozen photographers, French and American. The place was a bedlam, but the house and the line enjoyed it mightily. Something was happening in their midst, and it was because of this man's love for them. When he left us he talked to the men on the line, and though he spoke in French he was understood, I know.

A branch of Abbé Pierre's "Companions of Emmaus" has been started in Montreal to build cooperative hous-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing for the poor. We only wish that there were here in New York men with the ability to plan and build houses of hospitality for families instead of for single people as we have them now; to plan and build the farming communes which Peter Maurin, another Frenchman, a peasant, wrote and appealed for twenty-five years ago.

How Peter would have loved this other Peter! with his call for communities living in the midst of the poor, with their same poverty, begging for them, building for them. Abbé Pierre told how he stood before a vast basilica "for which they are collecting fantastic sums of money and how he cried out, 'Of course we need places of worship, but for mercy's sake, as long as you have slums in your town, as soon as you have built the four walls and put on a roof, stop decorating your sanctuary and understand this (and let us all understand it, for we all need to examine our consciences in this matter): it is not in the Eucharist that Jesus is cold; it is not in piling gold and marble and sumptuous stuffs round Jesus in the Eucharist that we shall honor Him; it is coming to His aid in the hands and feet of children throughout the world who are dying of cold and hunger because we have no care for them."

While I read this book and wrote these pages, I read too in the pages of a diocesan paper of a new convent being built to house sixteen nuns which was going to cost $85,000 and of a new foundling hospital for infants and children which was to cost ten million. Meanwhile, Mary Lisi lives around the corner on First Street in a cold little hole which costs her twelve dollars a week, and next to her are two more families paying even more rent for one room. Today our tenements are more congested than ever as they pull down more of the old.

It is time again to read the 25th Chapter of St. Matthew and to realize that it is by our treatment of the poor that we will be judged; and to pray for more priests of the vision and courage of Abbé Pierre, who realizes, as almost no one else seems to, that the family is the unit of society, and we must begin there.

THE STAGE

MR. BERNSTEIN CULTIVATES HIS GARDEN

VOLTAIRE'S *Candide* moves through its intricate dance of chaos—the mutilations and *autos da fe,* the venal skein of duplicity and vice and ineradicable perverseness—with a poised misanthropy forever irrecoverable. No one could possibly feel like this again; no one indeed would wish to—at such a point of knowledge, wit alone makes the burden tolerable. Human experience is seen here through the diminishing lens of the telescope, in a patterned anarchy which destroys at once the concepts of pattern and anarchy: all is possibility, and a swelling rage beats wildly about the flux, seeking to channel it. Yet how cleansing seems to us now the disgust of *Candide!* How serene and responsible its gaiety—that energetic idea of the good which alone, and somehow, redeems it from a satanic collusion in nullity and despair.

Miss Mary McCarthy might plausibly have restated this quality for the musical theater: her mind has the aristocratic, daylight disillusion, the glitter and austerity. Miss Lillian Hellman's attempt to do so is doubly thwarted. She cannot mesh *Candide* happily into the sentimental conventions of the musical stage; its tone is irrefrangibly moral. Nor can she impose a dramatic progression on either its personages or its rapid succession of malicious episodes. The intellectual point of *Candide* is made in the first chapter; everything subsequent is but a variation on themes, a ripple about the central stone. And the figures which people the satire are not personalities in the accepted sense, but Jonsonian humors: abstract qualities manipulated in a masque of rationalism.

What checks Miss Hellman's intention so decisively, however, is the temperament she shares so articulately with our society. Where Voltaire was passionate and disabused, we—in the person of Miss Hellman—are recriminatory and didactic; where Candor and Reason sufficed for him, we insist also on Will; a world which he saw under the mysterious dispensations of folly and chance, we interpret in the dry light of the Moral Imperative. Miss Hellman, as librettist, may take the liberty of interpolating incident; it is her reductions of feeling and thought which cause so much pain.

There are passages in this theater work—notably the insupportable caricature of the Inquisition—to which no responsible artist should attach his name. And this consistent perversion of tone wrenches *Candide* irrevocably out of context: an excellent case in point is Miss Hellman's inflation of the celebrated admonition to moral poise on which the novel closes—"That is excellently observed, but let us cultivate our garden"—into a stony principle of social economics. At any moment, I expected Candide to thunder: "From each according to his capacities; to each according to his needs!" Mr. Leonard Bernstein, the composer, has given this motif an exalted musical setting, religious in its intensity, and supreme on its own terms; patently, however, these are not the terms of Voltaire.

As a theater piece, "Candide" lacks wholly the stamp of a decisive personality. Mr. Tyrone Guthrie's staging is the poorest a major musical has had in seasons: he does nothing to animate the prosy languors of the libretto, and his manipulation of physical movement and stage space is a scandal—great useless caverns of emptiness yawn repeatedly about the performers. To

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

these players, one concedes a robust vocal authority of much distinction, welcome indeed in this day of *diseurs* and pseudo-singers; in the main, however, matter is brought off at the expense of manner. A certain unity of hard, brilliant tone would have given "Candide" zest: at is is, Miss Barbara Cook has charm but not elegance, Mr. Robert Rounseville's opacity is not warmed by good nature, the Pangloss (Mr. Max Adrian) is tart rather than irrepressibly fatuous. Mr. Louis Edmonds is closest perhaps to the stylistic mark, though all members of the ensemble would profit from schooling in the abstinences of the aristocratic mode.

It is Mr. Bernstein, finally, who cultivates his garden in "Candide," and brings the event to whatever lovely flowering it achieves. The fresh sensibility which was evident in "Wonderful Town" has here expanded and made itself secure; at the moment, Mr. Bernstein is incontestably our foremost composer for the musical theater. Others command a readier sentiment or more accessible pleasure; none exceeds him in fluency of wit and invention, qualities allied not with taking thought, but with the native endowment. The score for "Candide" is a little lexicon of musical forms and poetics; it is also a commentary of considerable point and astringency, and succeeds with delicate triumph in that most difficult task of bridging the divided musical sensibility of our society.

That is why, although it is necessary to say of "Candide" that it fails as theatrical occasion, it is possible to say of it that nothing so much justifies the loss as the having brought to birth Mr. Bernstein's music. (*At the Martin Beck.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

CRAZY, MAN, CRAZY

AT THE YEAR'S end the studios usually pop up with their flashiest musicals to put audiences in a gala mood. This year, however, they are presenting three of the most morbid dramas ever to be made into movies—hoping, probably, to win customers at the box office with a smack in the face. "The Wild Party" is about a group of jazz addicts on "a dream night" (which means, in their jargon, a wonderful evening). The uninitiated will need a glossary to follow some of the dialogue in John McPartland's script and will need more than that to follow the unrestrained behavior of these people going down the crazy route. Their leader is played by Anthony Quinn, somewhat old but quite effective as an ex-football player who thinks he's still a gridiron hero as he goes through life ruthlessly grabbing what he wants, treating all contacts as the opposing team. Several people are dependent on this small-time thief who's all brawn and no brains: his girl (Kathryn Grant) who has hung around him so long that she's apathetic about everything in life except a half-real world of jive; a pianist (excellently played by Nehemiah Persoff) who has some vague dream of starting his own orchestra; a sadistic cut-throat (Jay Robinson) whose hopped-up, effeminate behavior is fortunately never explained.

Into the clutches of this unholy group fall a naive couple: a naval lieutenant on leave (Arthur Franz) and his fiancée (Carol Ohmart) who keeps postponing their marriage. When Robinson lures them to a jive joint, ostensibly to hear Persoff's exciting piano but actually so Quinn can rob them, Carol at first finds herself attracted to Quinn. When he starts mauling her, she sees him for what he is. But then it is too late; Quinn wants not only Franz's money but Carol as well. Compared to the vicious violence that follows, Temple Drake's sanctuary was child's play. What starts like a bad dream with music becomes a horrible nightmare, and terror piles on terror. Director Sidney Harmon forgets, however, that an audience can stand only so much; and in this case the "so much" point is passed. No doubt "The Wild Party" means to be an off-beat film about people who play with fire, but its art becomes arty and then ludicrous and it winds up as little more than a half-baked exercise on the seamy side of life.

AN OFF-BEAT soap opera would seem impossible. But "Written on the Wind" is really just a soap opera (about the trials and tribulations of a pretty secretary who marries her very wealthy but alcoholic employer) that is trying awfully hard to be a shocker. The script, written by George Zuckerman from the novel by Robert Wilder, tries hard but only succeeds in presenting some rather absurd dialogue and four attractive-looking stars to put it over. It never quite makes clear how a sensible girl like Lauren Bacall happened to marry a playboy like Robert Stack, even though she must have been impressed by his expensive, whirlwind courtship and his father's Texas oil wells. Portraying Stack's guide, guard, mentor and general keeper-out-of-trouble, Rock Hudson disapproved of the marriage but has to admit, once they're safely back in papa's house in Texas, that Robert is staying off the bottle and is behaving pretty well.

After the comparatively calm first year, Lauren's troubles really start. Her unstable husband, misinformed by his doctor that he is sterile, seeks consolation in drinking. Her nymphomaniac sister-in-law (Dorothy Malone), furious that Rock has spurned her, tells Robert that Rock is in love with Lauren. This happens to be true, but Rock has carefully respected her mar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

riage. When Stack discovers Lauren is going to have a baby—which is his, of course—he suspects Rock, gets violent with his wife and, after her miscarriage, goes gunning for Rock. There's more, but by this time the audience, almost smothered in this unhealthy morass, is gasping for air. Director Douglas Sirk who maneuvered his cast thus far remains faithful to the up-beat ending, but everyone else has already realized you can't treat an O'Neill-type tale in a pretentiously slick manner. What was written on the wind is gone with it.

I'M NOT sure what Elia Kazan had in mind in making "Baby Doll." He probably wanted to point out the depths to which the human spirit sinks in this atmosphere of decay, which is placed in Mississippi. He doesn't editorialize, but his whole film is an editorial, written by a realistic camera that spares no sensibilities as it captures the townsfolk of Benoit, Miss., (where Boris Kaufman's impressively stark, black-and-white photography was taken). It fixes the picture of people in a low stratum of society who have a certain fierce pride in their ancestry but are indifferent to justice for the outsiders in their midst.

But when Producer-director Kazan turns from the general to the specific, he wallows in a story of moral degradation such as movies seldom display. He uses a script written by that master of the perverse, Tennessee Williams, who elaborated on one of his own early one-act plays, "27 Wagons Full of Cotton." Williams' plays are not known for their pleasantness, but most of them, in spite of their preoccupation with sex, have skillfully caught the quality of man's loneliness and need for love. "Baby Doll" sweeps passion, lust, meanness, contempt, cruelty, hatred, revenge, greed into one grim package but neglects to bring up any virtues and makes no attempt to win the audience to any of its characters.

The drama, most of which takes place in and around a seedy but once-handsome Southern mansion, mainly concerns four characters vividly and expertly portrayed under Kazan's direction. Karl Malden makes the middle-aged husband a frustrated fool who is so driven to desperation by his teen-age wife that he sets fire to the syndicate cotton gin hoping to win customers back to his own broken-down gin. As Baby Doll, the wife who refuses to have sexual relations with her husband until she is twenty (which is tomorrow), Carroll Baker portrays an immature Southern girl who sucks her thumb, sleeps in a crib, has aspirin and cokes for breakfast, treats her panting husband with contempt and naively welcomes the flattering attentions of the owner of the destroyed gin. As this fiery Sicilian, determined to get revenge on the man who started the fire, Eli Wallach gives a frightening portrait of a schemer who uses all his wiles to seduce his opponent's wife in order to get a signed confession about the fire from her. He doesn't have too much trouble with Baby Doll. Her husband is conveniently sent away to get new machinery for his gin. Her aunt (played as an aging nit-wit by Mildred Dunnock) leaves for the afternoon. And Baby Doll considers the Sicilian's maneuvers as part of an elaborate game of hide-and-seek throughout the house. Elia Kazan drags the game on in explicit detail while it mounts in surrealistic frenzy.

At all times Kazan, who is a superb craftsman, knows what he is doing in "Baby Doll." But the symbols, which Freudians find in many films without searching too hard, are so obviously planted this time that one hardly has to look for them. The cast, in full control of their Southern accents, handle the Williams' dialogue perfectly. And Williams and Kazan work well together throughout—but to what purpose? Who is the audience for this flaunting of traditional morality, for this unrelieved study of decay? For whom was this unhealthy film made?

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

A POEM

On the leafless winter vine
Pinned into a paper peak, each cluster
Now waits for *Noel* and *Old Night*
When one by one twelve grapes
Are eaten as the hour strikes . .
To the lips the very instant

Thus magnified midnight
Bursts from the mouth—New Year
And by the minute grape
Immense feast is incorporate
For it—the best fruits
Now the beauty of the earth
Bestows itself on those who feed from it
And by honey and by the almond are we blessed
In the kitchen there is a brew of these
That the tongue tastes but one day—
All afternoon before the *Good Night*
The woman is at the fire in a silent trance of stirring
And as we see her, or when we watch
The hidden hoard of the vine
Day after December day
Etched in clear stillness
We are as in love with patience as with life
Whose mute mixtures make us while we wait

Nothing precipitate in this good time
Nothing to be gotten over with
But in the tranquil pool of the hours we see whole—
breathing
While from the year's great bounty the feast prepares . .
And soon the Kings will come

SAMUEL MENASHE.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EVERY CHRISTMAS

THEY have set up the big tree in Rockefeller Plaza; the skinny street-corner Santa Clauses are out again and above the low mournful sounds of New York traffic their little silver bells are as insistent as *Sanctus* warnings; the big stores on Fifth Avenue are gaily festooned and buzzing with shoppers — Christmas is here again. At Mass the choir sings *Rorate coeli desuper* — liturgically, another year has passed and Christ is about to be born again. It seems not the time to write of events but of the Event.

It is said that the celebration of Christmas is becoming ever more secularized, and this is sadly true. But how can one who has ever considered the Event go through the season dumbly? For a Catholic the memories of a lifetime rise to the surface. One cannot be a Catholic and not know faith, in himself and others, and it is the faith that the Child was born and the world was redeemed which gives Christmas its meaning. Even to those who say Christmas is a myth, just the possibility of it, the fact that millions upon millions of good men have believed it, gives the feast its ultimate meaning. Voltaire is supposed to have said that if God did not exist He would have had to be invented. But who could have invented Christmas?

Halfway through life (a matter of statistics), you look back upon all the Christmases you have known. Each one is a little different from the others. The Event remains changeless. You change though, and you either learn more of what Christmas means—which is growth—or the meaning of it begins to escape you —which, I take it, is retrogression. The child understands Christmas as a child; the Trappist monk understands it as a man. It is better to be a man, unless you have lost the clarity of childhood—and then it may be better if you had never heard of Christmas because you have moved away from, not towards, the changeless Event.

As a youngster you learn that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, that there were Wise Men and shepherds and angels in the stable with the Child, His Mother and St. Joseph and that a wonderful thing happened. You may not understand why the Child was born, because you know nothing of sin (that comes with the dark wisdom of maturity), but you know that what happened was a thing of wonder, of beauty and of love—and that is enough for faith. That is enough for a child's Christmas.

I remember third grade and a certain Sister Sara. We were all boys in that class, and yet the Sister wanted a Christmas play. Some of us were angels and a few were shepherds. There were Three Kings and a St. Joseph, and one kid named Emil was dressed in blue and white, to be the Blessed Virgin. I remember that he wore a first-communion veil over his head and a long blue robe. He must have been a holy sight. But so solemn was the occasion, so lively our faith, that no one openly jeered at him. To make fun of poor Emil would have been impious.

This was the cast. The rest of us were "extras." First we were the townsfolk of Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph went from desk to desk, pleading for room, and our role was to turn them away until finally they reached one Peter's desk. He was the kindly inn-keeper who offered room in his stable. You can imagine the zest with which we played the hard-hearted townsfolk of Bethlehem. In the third grade villains are far more meaningful than heroes. I still remember the piping voices: "Go way, go way from here!"

Then, when the weary trudge from desk to desk was finished, the Mother and St. Joseph disappeared from sight—this was the way Sister Sara planned it —and the angry townsfolk became an angelic choir. "Winds through the olive trees softly did blow, round little Bethlehem, long, long ago," the class sang with devotion while the Sister — childlike herself — pumped the little hand-organ, playing a wheezy accompaniment. Then, the makeshift curtain was raised for the classic tableau. We all sang another angelic chorus: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will!"

This was crude perhaps, rude—but it was Sister Sara's way, and I have never forgotten it. The Sister surely did not know much about advanced methods of education, but there is the record: it happened many years ago, and whenever it is Christmas I think of the "play," as we called it, the year Emil with the blue robe over his corduroy trousers and high-laced shoes was the Mother and yet nobody laughed.

That was the Christmas when the real story first made a deep impression. Before that it had been Santa Claus (or pretending to believe in Santa Claus so the folks would not be disappointed) and the presents under the tree, and a hazy idea of what was being celebrated. But the year Emil was the Blessed Mother, the Event itself came into clear focus, and ever since, though I should lose my faith a thousand times over, when Christmas is celebrated, I would still have to lose it again. You can't escape Christmas; you can only escape yourself.

JOHN COGLEY.

(Reprinted from the 1952 Christmas issue of The Commonweal.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Epilogue, Songs of the Spouses, Complaint of Love

(After Solomon and after the Seventh Unicorn Tapestry.)

The Bridegroom's Song:
How lovely are her feet
And the joint of her jeweled
Thigh. Her belly is a hill
Of wheat with a fault of lilies
Her navel is beautiful with wine
Her breasts are grapes and her teeth
As flocks clean from the washing
And in her mouth is a taste of apple.

The Bride's Song:
His legs are pillars of marble
At a base of gold
And his golden head is hid
With the ferns of his hair. His eyes
Are washed with milk as doves
At the water and under his tongue
A place of honey! O my love
Is a place of spice beneath my breast.

Tale of Courtship:
A wild flower in the weeds
Of fields is my love
Among the loves of the daughters
And so is my beloved
An apple tree an apple
Tree in the woods of sons.
I sit down under his shadow
And his fruit is sweet to my mouth.

Help me with wine O comfort
Me with apples
For I am sick of love.
His hand is under my head
His right hand shall hold me O daughters
By the deer and harts of the field
Do not stir! You do not
Wake my love until he please.

Look, my loved one
Leaps on the mountain!
Like a young deer whose horns
Leap from its head look
My love is like a roe
He waits like a young hart
Beside my window he
Watches through the lattices.

The voice of my loved one:
"Arise my love
My beautiful one and come
For winter is gone the long
Rain past and flowers
Appear in the earth. It is
The time of the birds' singing
And the voice of the turtles is heard in the land.

"It is the time of pruning
For the fig has shown
Its fruit and the flower of the grape
Spills forth its sweet smell.
Rise my love arise
My beautiful one and come
And catch with me the little
Golden fox that plays at the vine.

"My dove in the ledge of rock
In the secret place
Of the stair show me your face
Let your voice come to my ear."
And I to my love (you know
He feeds on the flowers of the field?):
When the morning breaks and the sha-
Dows turn, come with the deer from its hill."

My heart kept watch in my sleep
Until he spoke:
"My head is full of dew
And my hair of the drops of night
I have put off my coat
I washed the dust from my feet
Now open to my love." And I felt
My hand drop with myrrh at the lock.

The Complaint:
My love had gone! Tho my soul
Shook to hear him
And my guts moved for his touch.
I cried for him through all
The streets of town till the guards
Found me and tore away my veil.
And still I weep for sons
To tell how I am sick of love.

Epilogue:
And others cry for you
Melancholy
Unicorn though your bright pen
Keep you splendid in a field
Of color where ev'ry flower
Bends to you. Over-
Whelmed by violence of scent
Struck with color one fails almost

To see where your white
Fur bleeds
Lanced with a formal strength
Strange to such a gentle one,
Such eyes! There is another
Hunt and another gentler
Hunter, there is another
Love and another holier lover.

JOHN LOGAN.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the Grand Tradition

BETTE RICHART

A MAJOR POET has given us a new reason to weigh a timeless question: what is the experience of poetry? Is it more, or less, than life? More, or less, than love? Is it the lamp on the corner buried in leaves, or is it indeed the real sun? Reading Miss Moore, one knows what it is: it is life and love and the real sun. Poetry is not a substitute for, nor a supplement to, anything. It is the unpompous contemplation of nobility. Nobody can read Marianne Moore and remain at odds with life.

This is a remarkable achievement, really, since she is an eccentric in the grand tradition: she strikes attitudes; she lets the chips fall; she "deplores gambling" but writes a poem glorifying a race horse, Tom Fool (partly because of his name, I am sure!), then apologizes in a footnote, having received an award from Youth United for a Better Tomorrow. She was, she says, "worried indeed," and the episode is beguiling because irony is absent altogether. The insouciant perfection of this horse evoked a poem, but the tribute was for him alone, not for his profession; it is important to her for us to remember this.

"Tom Fool at Jamaica" is the most typical among this nosegay of poems*, and supplies us with many meanings, many explanations of Marianne Moore as poet and philosopher. She is preoccupied with animals, does not relate them merely to human beings, but sees them as such; her prestige is based upon a technique inadmissible in poetry: the pathetic fallacy. Emily Post has remarked that a lady can do anything; Miss Moore is proof that a great poet can do anything also. "Love God and do as you please," as a maxim of the devout life, has a correlative in the artistic life: "Love style and do as you please." There is no substitute for style, not even morality, and this lady, shuttling back and forth between the sublime and the ridiculous, not merely linking but fusing them, has lived with La Fontaine. What is the spirit of fable? The pathetic fallacy functioning effectively. Aesop, La Fontaine, James Thurber and Marianne Moore have triumphed similarly; that she is La Fontaine's successful translator is a key to more than her mind. It is a key to her entire world, to the world of Pogo-without-coyness which is, to borrow from Marianne Moore herself the fitting phrase, an "apparition of splendor."

That poem concludes:

"Maine should be pleased that its animal is
not a waverer, and rather
than fight, lets the primed quill fall.
Shallow oppressor, intruder,
insister, you have found a resister."

She is of course writing of the porcupine, and has made his belligerence charming—a feat equally rare in art or life.

When she writes of courage (as she does so often) it is a courage never unmixed with belligerence. In this new volume, her poem "Blessed is the Man," written for the Class Day ceremonies of the Columbia University chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and first published, of all places, in the *Ladies' Home Journal,* advises thus:

". . . blessed is the author
who favors what the supercilious do not
favor—
who will not comply. Blessed, the unaccommodating man."

The words "adjustment" and "compromise" do not occur in her vocabulary, as indeed they cannot in the vocabulary of any serious poet.

MOST POETS, however, seem to pay Prometheus' own price for their fire-bringing. Somehow Miss Moore does not give this impression. Her virtue is not achieved by labyrinthine ways; it is in fact the "moral rectitude" of another generation, which not only "deplores gambling" but sums up the true, the good and the beautiful, perhaps with a slightly false facility, in the merely ethical. Her morality is a bit obtuse, and does not seem to allow for the kind of conflict that might occur in a saint if he had to choose between paying his own rent and rescuing a starving family.

Philosophically, she might well have been a bore, had she not been rescued by erudition. One unique quality of her work is that she has made learning more lively than any poet save Dame Edith Sitwell. Pound and Eliot have convinced us that immense knowledge is valid equipment for poets, but they have not the winsome finesse with which Miss Moore and Dame Edith display the emeralds and rubies that the mind alone collects. Apart from all morality, all sentimen-

*LIKE A BULWARK. By Marianne Moore. Viking. $2.50.

Bette Richart, a frequent reviewer in these pages, is the author of *Estranged,* a volume of poems.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tality, the mind of Marianne Moore glitters purely; as she herself has said,

"the mind is an enchanting thing is an enchanted thing. . .
it is a power of strong enchantment. It
is like the dove—neck animated by sun;
it is memory's eye;
it's conscientious inconsistency."

Further, she says, "it tears off the veil; tears the temptation, the mist the heart wears." She has confuted, with Edith Sitwell's expert help, the fallacy that to be brilliant is to be without compassion. To be brilliant is to be without illusion, to see reality beyond the veil; that is what it means to be holy also. To see the beauty of suffering is to accept our own; to accept our own is to wish all the more fervently, knowing its weight, to alleviate the pain of others. This kind of vision requires either sheer sanctity or sheer intellect (so seldom interchangeable). Miss Moore's mind belongs to a tradition; its noblesse oblige is an insight into the human condition—that is to say, into the human tragedy.

And it is a mind which has a thousand eyes. The notes to her poems are poems in themselves, an index to her personality as Shaw's prefaces are to his. In editing, quoting and rephrasing fragments of knowledge, as diverse as that of the quiz programs, Miss Moore achieves a style that is a reprimand to all slovenly or undigested scholarship. She has defined her own style in her poem "Style":

"There is no suitable simile. It is as though
the equidistant three tiny arcs of seeds in a
banana had been conjoined by Palestrina."

It is indeed.

This poem in her new book reminds us of one called "Poetry" in her *Selected Poems,* dating back more than twenty years, when everything in her technique meant innovation undreamed-of. Here are the opening lines:

"I, too, dislike it. There are things that are
important beyond all this fiddle.
Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt
for it, one discovers in
it, after all, a place for the genuine."

Again like Shaw, she is dogmatic. Archibald MacLeish had been assuring us not long before that a poem should not mean, but be; one cannot help thinking there is not much difference between jargon and Jabberwocky, but quite a difference between analysis and crystal-gazing. One could imagine Miss Moore replying to Mr. MacLeish with some asperity: "But how can anything *be* but not *mean,* whether a poem or a pumpkin?" How cordially one applauded her, all those years ago, for "finding a place for the genuine," rather than for "the palpable and mute." Much as I admired some of MacLeish's technical experiments, it was impossible to forgive him that phrase, and I bore a personal love for the woman who had counteracted its lushness with a classical sobriety. We all dislike now and then what we most love, unless we love something or somebody who consistently deludes us, as good poetry certainly never can. I, too, dislike it. In fact, I am in love with it, but have never yet found it palpable or mute.

PRECISION is often poetry by accident, as in that little book most doctors remember and cherish, Homer Smith's *Lectures on the Kidney.* I too cherish it, for an exactitude and unpretentiousness very similar to Miss Moore's. God and art are present as Dr. Smith describes the anatomy and function of the kidney, partly because he knows so thoroughly what he is doing. Precision and compassion are the components of true learning; Marianne Moore's sketches of plants and animals are like her poems—exact, bizarre, not leaving anything to the imagination but merely supplying it with its materials, as science does. At the time she began it she was as much needed as the Imagists had been long before.

But without her own special and disturbing compassion ("all compassion disturbs, and absolute compassion disturbs absolutely," to paraphrase Lord Acton), her fabliaux, her uniquely charming belligerence, her rather commonplace ethic redeemed by rare learning, would possibly become merely eccentric. She has, however, learned to love the albatross, and has shown more effectively than Coleridge himself that he prayeth best who loveth best all things both great and small. Her dramatis personae, the jerboa, 'the frigate pelican,' snakes, mongooses, peacocks, the woodweasel, inhabit our hearts as figures of pity, envy, courage; not since the albatross have birds and beasts affected us so poetically. In attributing to them qualities which are certainly not theirs, namely the human qualities, she has shown us what those qualities truly are. She has done more than love the albatross; she has anatomized him, accurately and tenderly. She loves him not as penance but as fulfillment; not in sorrow but with zest, as if he had never been a burden. She is without false guilt; no wonder her mind is free and her heart so innocently open to creatures.

To bring aid to refugees as they cross the Hungarian border and in Austrian emergency camps

Send your donations to

Catholic Relief Services
National Catholic Welfare Conference
Empire State Bldg., New York 1, N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Moments of Beauty and of High Idealism

DOUBLE LIVES: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. By William Plomer. Noonday. $3.50.

By ELIZABETH BARTELME

IF WILLIAM PLOMER had chosen to write an adventure story rather than an examination of his formative years, he would have to look no further than his own experiences. His intellectual development went hand in hand with a nomadic life that included sheep raising in the mountains of South Africa, running a Kaffir store in Zululand, publishing, with Roy Campbell, a German-language newspaper that outraged the South African colonials, and teaching in what he says was described to him as "the Eton of Japan." And all before his twenty-fifth year.

His wanderings (and his double life) got off to a flying start when, a few months after his birth in the North Transvaal, he and his mother were packed off to England in order to keep young William alive. This was the beginning of a steady shuttling between the two continents that rooted in the boy a firm conviction of his English heritage and undoubtedly played a decisive part in his eventual emergence as a British rather than a South African writer.

But Mr. Plomer does not discount pre-natal influences in binding him to England. With an affectionate and mildly sardonic flourish he opens the door on a gallery of high-spirited personalities who adorn his family tree, and who, in his parents' generation, "came from that stratum of society which may be called the stranded gentry." All of Mr. Plomer's art and much of the charm of his book are in these sketchy, nervous ancestor portraits. Here both his wit and his sympathy are fully engaged; his ability at characterization is in full play.

Perhaps this is why when he gets around to himself his account flattens out, the objectivity is gone and with it the pungency. Mr. Plomer's amused irony disappears when he casts a backward glance at his school days, the unexpectedly violent reception of his first novel, his memories of Japanese life. A kind of unconscious egotism begins to mark his attitude; he begins to take himself very seriously indeed and he is not at his best in this role.

Nevertheless, William Plomer is a true artist, if a minor one, and there are moments of beauty and of high idealism that are memorable. His description of the effects of solitude on his intellectual development and the crystallization of his determination to write during his months on the mountain sheep ranch are among these. His descent from these heights to help his father run a native trading post is a less exalted experience, but he conveys sharply the enthusiasm and excitement that seized both the father and the son as they set out for Zululand. It was during this period that his understanding of the native South African began to deepen, and that his writings began to be published. His association with Roy Campbell and Laurens van der Post encouraged him greatly, and it was with the latter that he finally set out for Japan.

Mr. Plomer's Japanese experience is perhaps the most disappointing part of his book, not because of his writing about the Japanese people and culture, but because in it he exposes his own philosophical commitments. They seem to add up to what he himself describes as a "cheerful hedonism and scepticism . . . to both religion and politics . . . an absence of hopefulness." This tired-sounding attitude toward life seems particularly sad when contrasted with the picture Mr. Plomer draws of himself as a passionate and idealistic youth. When coupled with what he has to say about Japanese suicidal tendencies—and although he abhors them and, in one case, personally prevented a suicide, he now in middle age "might hesitate to dissuade an intending suicide, and there are circumstances in which . . . I should regard it as only human to help a person to bring about his or her end. . . ."—one can only conclude that Mr. Plomer's hopelessness has led him into decadent and soft-headed thinking.

Literary Noise and Poetic Art

GREEN WITH BEASTS. By W. S. Merwin. Knopf. $3.50.

By JOHN LOGAN

EXCLUSIVE of the appearance of neurosis, W. S. Merwin gives the impression one expects of poets: he is under thirty as poets are always supposed to be; he has long hair and a suffused quality about the eyes; he has tutored the children of a princess in Portugal; he has lived in the household of a master (Robert Graves); his first book was a prize poem (in the Yale Younger Poet's competition); he has the benefit of a wealthy patron (Kenyon Review Fellowship); he spends his energy writing poems rather than in, say, selling insurance, playing publisher or stunning undergraduates in university classrooms.

Merwin has had the courage to publish three books in six years even though not all the poems are terribly good: there is in the present book a jejune piece called "Tobacco," a number that are plain dull and at least one really ambitious piece, "The Annunciation," that doesn't come off. It tries for a kind of phenomenology determined by the reverie of a young married virgin and it suffers from the general diffuseness of the technique (which makes the poem "and"-ridden, etc.), from the noticeable failure of its opening image

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

("darkness . . . blacker than any night"), from the fact that its "whirring wing" and "no-name-for-it" themes are repeated in a number of other poems in this volume, and from the incontrovertible mastery of Rilke in his poems on the life of the Virgin. Rilke relied on self-knowledge of the creative act for his understanding of the Virgin's conceiving (and on the artist's painful exhaustion and terrible anxiety over future production for his empathy into the situation of the Pieta). The power and economy of Rilke's Marian pieces should give any poet pause who is not certain of a new success.

To my mind Merwin's beautiful "Burning the Cat" and his "White Goat, White Ram," the latter a fantasy of infant memory, show his religious sensibility to better advantage than the more specifically religious poems—but "Prodigal Son" is a good one.

My biggest objection to Merwin is that he pays insufficient attention to the life of individual lines. These suffer from an excess of harmony, which finally jars, and overconsideration of pause with underconsideration of measure, which results in dragged gait. He misses many enjambment opportunities and, while writing lines of comparable length, frustrates the search for regular patterns of stress. The over-all result is a slackness of line which often destroys the shape of a poem, for a poem is best thought of as first a shape (incarnation) of breath (word) in the ear guyed by the tension of verse lines, themselves breaths. A poem is a kind of breathed ballet for the ear. If these shapes in the ear are slack, then the presentation which the poem should finally be, the vision generated by the dance of sense, just doesn't happen. Such failures give us the distinction between literary noise and poetic art. Merwin is still young and the amount of the former in his work will doubtless decrease in future. Anyhow the present book is one of the most important of the year.

Historian, Biographer, Artist

THIS HALLOWED GROUND. By Bruce Catton. Doubleday. $5.95.

By JOHN COURNOS

TO SAY that this is the best history of the Civil War is understatement. It is indeed perfect, perfect in the sense that the many-sidedness of that conflict is seen by an eye capable of grasping what it sees comprehensively, as an indivisible unity, as something to be grasped only if seen as a whole. Events make men, and men make events; this interplay of forces against inevitable backgrounds which give them meaning offers an opportunity to an historian of imagination. This implies order, a great virtue in any writer, and in any human being for that matter, but absolutely essential in a historian. For history is ever present in our lives and we have no choice but to come to terms with it by understanding it.

And that is precisely what Mr. Catton does. He makes us understand the Civil War by showing us what moved men undesirous of and untrained for war to endure privations and face death for four long years to achieve victory for the North in a fierce internecine struggle which left the South devastated, and the North a symbol of a new world come to birth, a world of industry and machines which, having dealt a death-blow to the aristocracy and culture of the South, would in its time downgrade the still older aristocracies and cultures overseas.

Mr. Catton astutely points out that what had actually taken place was not so much a war as a revolution. Especially during the final phase of the war, as the Union armies marched through the South, devastating the country as they went, were the rank and file as well as their leaders imbued with the mood that they were destroying a social order hateful in their eyes. But this revolutionary process had been going on within as well as without. The idea of a civilization and attendant

J. F. POWERS

"Of all modern writers known to me who have dealt with Catholic religious life . . . (he) is far and away the best."
—FRANK O'CONNOR, *Saturday Review*

THE

"A one-man show at the top-level of short story writing. Of a rare, indeed almost unique perfection among the short stories of this half-century."
—SEAN O'FAOLAIN, *The Listener*

PRESENCE

"I admire Mr. Powers very much — story after story is worked out to the finest possible point. . . . What a true writer he seems on the immature American scene."
—ALFRED KAZIN, *New Republic*

OF

"He has the essential equipment of the artist, a firm philosophical position, a body of unique raw material . . . a splendid skill in self-expression."
—EVELYN WAUGH, *Commonweal*

GRACE

"Mr. Powers stands among the three or four best short-story writers at work in this country today . . . out of the homely details of parish-house gossip and chancery politics he distills the richness and variety of Catholic life in America."
— *Reporter Magazine*

A new collection of nine stories by the author of "Prince of Darkness." Have you read it yet?

$2.95 at all booksellers

DOUBLEDAY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aristocracy built on the master-and-slave principle was repugnant to the soldiers of the North and of the self-reliant but as yet uncultivated West, and their flurry was at its wildest when they came to South Carolina, the State that had dared to initiate the struggle to defend to the last social order based on human servitude and the violation of human dignity. While admitting that "the old values were real, and the effort to preserve them had nobility," the historian notes that the invading army "had its own nobility and its own standards; it had, in fact, the future of the race in its keeping, with all the immeasureable potential that might reside in a people who had decided that they would no longer be bound by the limitations of the past."

As interesting as are Mr. Catton's ideological interpretations and conclusions, what makes his narrative enthralling is his ability to bring people to life, people who, in a particular sense, are the embodiment of the struggle and the changes it effected. The historian, by the very nature of his craft, must be also a biographer; he must know human nature and how men act under its impulsions. Mr. Catton has this gift to a superlative degree. It would be wrong to say that he indulges in heroics, that he "dramatizes," that is, imposes drama where it does not actually exist; rather does he extract from any situation the drama inherent in it. His aim is to establish reality, a reality that is at once intimate and convincing—perhaps by its very understatement. Thus you first meet Grant in this book as if you were meeting him casually in a roomful of people, "a short, spare and somewhat unkempt" person, whom you probably would scarcely notice. "He was unprepossessing at first glance, but there was something about him that made a man take a second look . . . "

If an efficient historian must be an efficient biographer, he also must needs be something of a landscape artist; to understand a battle you must know the background against which it is fought so that you may have some sort of picture of the disposition of opposing forces. And in this Mr. Catton is a master, avoiding the confusion of most battle descriptions. Consider, for example, the lay of the land at Chickamauga as described by him: "Maybe the real trouble was that the battle was too theatrical. People saw too much; most particularly, the Confederates could see too much. They were up in the balconies and all of the Federals were down in the orchestra pit, and when the fighting began, every move down on the plain was clearly visible to the Southerners on the heights . . ." And the unorthodox battle which follows, never ordered by the Generals, but spontaneously organized by the rank and file, makes a marvellously vivid picture which no reader can possibly forget.

One could go on indefinitely praising this book. But it is sufficient to state in conclusion that it is strong, all of a piece, without loose threads. And it should be added that it should go on the permanent shelf, to rub friendly shoulders with Carl Sandburg's *Lincoln*.

for those special friends
who want something special—

CROSS CURRENTS quarterly

bound volume for 1956—$5.00—Vol. VI

200,000 words of serious writing by GUARDINI • MARITAIN • TILLICH • VANN • HUSSERL • LANDSBERG • DUMERY • HEER • DOMENACH • MASCALL • LOEWENBERG • JOHNSON • COOMARASWAMY • JEMOLO • MERLEAU-PONTY • CASSERLEY

back volumes also available; VOL. I, $6

order from your book store or use coupon.

CROSS CURRENTS, 3111 Broadway, New York 27, N.Y.

☐ Please send bound volume for 1956.
☐ Send back volumes I, II, III, IV, V.
☐ Please enter subscription ($3 for 4 issues).

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... Zone ..... State .....

☐ Check enclosed ☐ Bill me
☐ Send gift card

THE CATHOLIC WORKER

December, 1956

Pacificism and Hungary
EDMUND J. EGAN

On Pilgrimage
DOROTHY DAY

The Cry of a Baby
EILEEN FANTINO DIAZ

Hurrah for Whom?—a Review
ARTHUR SHEEHAN

Subscription 25¢ per year. Foreign 80¢.
Bundle orders, 10 or more copies,
1¢ per copy plus postage.

Free Sample Copy on Request

The Catholic Worker

GRamercy 5-9180

223 Chrystie Street New York 2, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Informal Treatise

THE LIFE OF MAN WITH GOD. By Thomas Verner Moore. Harcourt, Brace. $3.95.

By ALBAN BAER

IS IT possible to determine, by means of a questionnaire, the condition of the spiritual life in the United States? Is is permissible to use the device of the experimental psychologist and social worker for understanding the deep recesses of the soul? Father Moore believes that it is, and he has compiled a soul-searching list of questions, all the way from "Seven degrees of the spiritual life" ("In which of these degrees can you place yourself now in your present spiritual life?" "Which was the lowest degree you were ever in? Which was the highest?") to "Have you ever experienced a scene in which Christ seemed to come to you and you pledged yourself to Him . . . Did you then lose all interest in things not concerned with carrying out the will of God, and the actual communion of love with your heavenly spouse?"

These samples give a fair idea of the questions asked. To one who suggests that the temptation for a practical joker might be irresistible, Father Moore replies that in fact it has not been operative, since "such an attempt to be of any importance would make itself statistically apparent in what is known as our curve of distribution. There should be a hump at the upper extreme instead of a fading to zero. But, as we have said, our curve fades to zero at questions 28, 29, and 30 (the last questions, dealing with a repetition and prolongation of spiritual marriage)." Moreover, he quotes a number of respondents who say that answering the questionnaire proved a great spiritual help.

For the rest, Father Moore's book is an informal treatise on ascetical theology, the stages of prayer and contemplation, and the mystical experience. The only difference from countless other books of the same kind is that he illustrates what he is saying by constant references to the replies of his "respondents" to the questionnaire. Some of these are especially moving: directly, through no haze of literary artifice, we learn of the strivings, aspirations, and successes of missioners, sisters, and curates; steamfitters, schoolteachers, and housewives. It is impossible to believe that those, at least, who have been quoted in this book have written with any but the most honest of motives. As befits a priest and a Carthusian, Father Moore writes with disarming simplicity. His occasional resort to the jargon of psychology and statistics, so common today, seems to this reviewer less happy.

Classified

★RATES, payable in advance: 16⅔c a word (6 words, $1). Centered lines $1 each. 12 words or 2 lines minimum. Discounts: 5% for 3 times, 10% for 7 times, 15% for 13 times.

IRISH BOOKS AND GIFTS

★ Books, Linens, Gifts. *Catalogs.* IRISH INDUSTRIES DEPOT, INC. 870 Lexington Ave., (near 65th), New York

SPIRITUAL READING

★THINKER'S DIGEST, International Miniature Spiritual Reading Quarterly. "*Brilliant Experiment*"—London Editor. $2 yearly. Samples: 4 issues $1. Sent anywhere with gift card. Dallas, Pennsylvania.

PRINTED LABELS

★500 Gummed labels, printed 3 lines, $1. HERDMAN, 326 Broadway, Newark 4, N. J.

STATUES

★Every kind of religious statue and painting done to order. Reasonable. ST. BENEDICT STUDIO Westport, Conn.

CHRISTMAS CRIBS

★Hand carved wood and ivory cribs made by Catholic cooperative in India, from $10 to $50. For further information write Mrs. Ludlow Kravis, 8 Waterway, Manhasset, N.Y.

REVIEWERS

Elizabeth Bartelme is on the staff of a well-known New York publishing house.

John Cournos is a well-known critic and anthologist of Americana.

John Logan, author of *A Cycle For Mother Cabrini*, has a poem in this issue.

Dom Alban Baer, of the Portsmouth Priory, is a frequent contributor to The Commonweal.

Educational

NEW JERSEY

Georgian Court College

Four-year course leading to B.A. and B.S. degree provides a solid background of general culture and special training in one particular field. Well-integrated program in Liberal Arts, Fine Arts, Science, Music, Home Economics, Business Administration, Teacher Training. Fully accredited. Address Secretary. Lakewood, N.J.

KANSAS

St. Benedict's College

Atchison, Kansas. A Catholic College for men conducted by the Benedictine Fathers. A Liberal Arts College, accredited by the North Central Association. Located fifty miles northwest of Kansas City, Missouri, on the Missouri River. Address Registrar for information.

RHODE ISLAND

Portsmouth Priory

A Monastery and School at Portsmouth, Rhode Island. A community of American Monks of the English Benedictine Congregation. Inquiries concerning the work of the Monastery, and the qualifications required for the monastic life, should be addressed to the Very Reverend Father Prior.

Portsmouth Priory School

Portsmouth, Rhode Island, 23 miles from Providence, 8 miles from Newport, on inland waters of Narragansett Bay. Conducted by Benedictine Monks assisted by Lay Masters. Five forms, 8th grade and four years of high school. Standard Preparatory Course for all colleges and technical schools. Added opportunities in Mathematics and Languages. College Board Examination. Full facilities for athletics including sailing. Address the Headmaster.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's Not Yet Too Late . . .

to give a subscription to The Commonweal for the Christmas season and 1957 to some relative or friend—doctor, housewife, lawyer, student, business executive, farmer, labor leader or teacher (priest, layman or Religious)—who would thoroughly enjoy the magazine's stimulating approach to issues of the day.

Your Commonweal Christmas gift subscription will provide an abundance of good reading: some thirteen hundred pages of thoughtful and candid comment on the American scene and worldwide developments, political and artistic . . . the social and literary comment of such authors as Horace Gregory, H. A. Reinhold, Wallace Fowlie, Christopher Dawson, William V. Shannon, Will Herberg, Martin Turnell, Thomas Molnar, Bede Griffiths, among others.

Your gift subscription will also supply a number of firsthand dispatches from Italy, France, Britain and other lands, outspoken and healthy exchanges of opinion in letters from our readers and such keys to further enjoyment as are supplied by The Commonweal's discerning reviews of current books, plays and movies.

Bargain Christmas rates, which you may apply to your own subscription renewal regardless of expiration date, are in force until January 15. Two subscriptions (or one two-year subscription) cost $15; three or more subscriptions: $7 each. (Additional postage outside the United States and Canada: $2 a year.)

— — — — — — CHRISTMAS ORDER FORM — — — — — —

THE COMMONWEAL, 386 4th Ave., New York 16. (MUrray Hill 3-9685)

Enclosed is $..... Send The Commonweal for one year to:

NAME _____	NAME _____
STREET _____	STREET _____
CITY _____	CITY _____

MY NAME IS _____

ADDRESS _____

☐ Send Gift Announcement Cards, OR ☐ Send the Gift Cards to me.

12-28-56

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED